



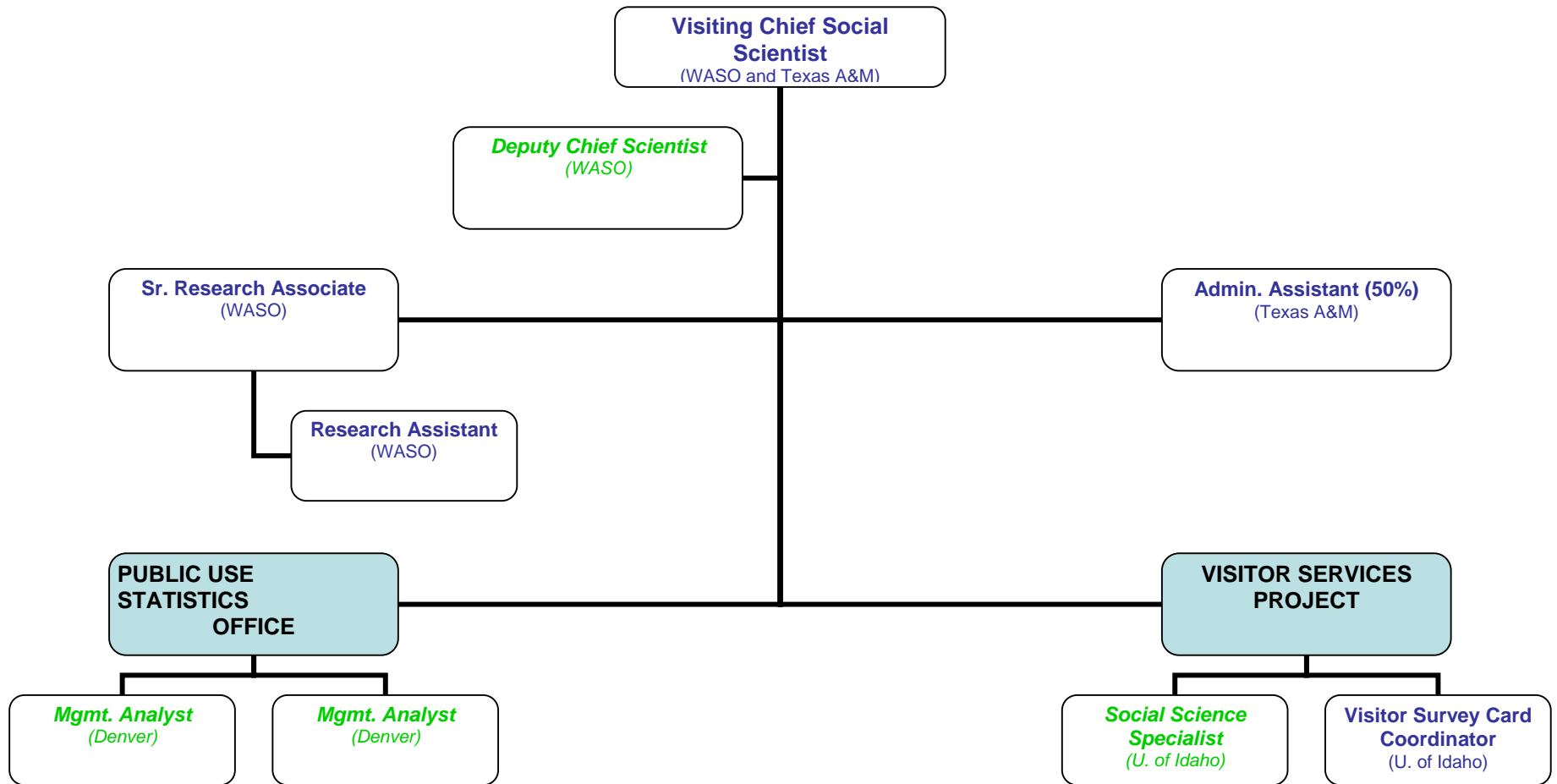
National Park Service Social Science Program



FY 2004 Annual Report

March 2005

NPS Social Science Program Staffing



NOTE: Positions in italics are federal employees. Other positions are non-federal.

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National Park Service Social Science Program

FY 2004 Annual Report

Task Order J5040 02 0018, Cooperative Agreement H50000 02 0271

Gulf Coast Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) Social Science Program is located in the Natural Resource Stewardship and Science directorate. A Visiting Chief Social Scientist (VCSS), who serves a three-year renewable term and is co-located in Washington, D.C. and at Texas A&M University, heads the program. The VCSS is a faculty member at Texas A&M University working in partnership with the NPS.

The overall objectives of the Social Science Program are to conduct and promote state-of-the-art social science related to the mission of the National Park Service and to deliver usable knowledge to NPS managers and the public. Specific functions of the Office of the VCSS are to:

- Provide supervision and guidance to the Visitor Services Project, Public Use Statistics Office, and other activities of the NPS Social Science Program;
- Manage the approval process for submitting NPS information-collection requests to the Office of Management and Budget;
- Sponsor and provide direction to social science research related to the national needs of the NPS;
- Serve as liaison with other science and related programs of the NPS;
- Serve as liaison with the USGS Biological Resources Division, the Department of the Interior, and other federal agencies on social science activities; and
- Advise the Secretary of the Interior, the NPS Director, and the National Leadership Council as requested.

This report summarizes major accomplishments of the NPS Social Science Program in FY 2004.

Provide Supervision and Guidance to Activities of the NPS Social Science Program

<http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/index.htm>

Washington Office

The Washington office of the Social Science Program has responsibility for budgeting and for overseeing program activities that originate in Washington. It also coordinates many social science activities within the Natural Resource Stewardship and Science directorate and other parts of the National Park Service.

A full-time senior research associate staffs the Washington office. A research assistant (usually a graduate student) is employed each semester in the office. In addition, the Deputy Chief Scientist of the Natural Resource Stewardship and Science directorate coordinates many inherently federal functions of the Social Science Program, such as contracting and oversight of the three federal employees working in the program.

Important activities of the Washington office in FY 2004 included the following:

- Natural Resource Program Center Evaluation. The Washington office completed a customer evaluation of six technical assistance activities of the NPS Natural Resource Program Center. The office assisted in designing the survey instrument and analyzed and reported the results.
- Alaska Region Social Science Research Plan. With the Texas A&M University office, the Washington office planned and conducted nine stakeholder workshops to solicit public input into a new Alaska Region Social Science Research Plan. The plan will be published in 2005. Workshops were conducted in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kotzebue, and Juneau, Alaska and in Washington, D.C. A draft literature and policy review of social science research and activities in Alaska was also published as part of this process.
- Visitor Information System. Washington office staff pilot-tested the Social Science Program's new "Visitor Information System" (VIS) at Shenandoah National Park. The VIS is a partnership with the park and the NPS Fee Program. VIS uses fee collectors at park entrance stations to electronically record Zip codes of park visitors. The Social Science Program's Washington office trained NPS fee collectors in the use of VIS and developed several GIS templates to map visitor characteristics based on information collected.
- Social Science Studies Collection. The Social Science Studies Collection, an online digital library of social science research in the National Park System, grew to 260 entries under the direction of the Washington office. This archive, part of the NPS Focus library, houses the largest collection of national park social science studies in the U.S. Currently, NPS Focus is available on the NPS Intranet, but plans are in place to make the library publicly accessible.
- Social Science Intern Program. Each semester the Social Science Program employs an intern in its Washington office. Interns assist on a variety of daily and special projects. They may also have opportunities to work in parks during visitor surveys. For information on intern



Figure 1. Stakeholder workshop, Kotzebue, Alaska, Alaska Region Social Science Research Plan.

application procedures see: <http://nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Internships-2005.pdf>. Interns in FY 2004 included Jasmine Chen (West Virginia University), Laurel Sipes (UCLA), Amanda Bowman (University of Wisconsin- Green Bay), and Chris Ellis (East Carolina University).

Texas A&M University Office

A half- time administrative assistant staffs the Texas A&M University (TAMU) office of the NPS Social Science Program. The primary responsibility of this position is to oversee the budgetary aspects of the cooperative agreement with TAMU supporting the Social Science Program and to edit and print reports generated by its various activities. The TAMU office also manages travel, coordinates peer reviews of publications, and assists with other tasks as needed.

- Publications. In FY 2004, the TAMU office published two technical reports from the 2000 NPS Comprehensive Survey of the American Public. These dealt with racial and ethnic diversity among users and non- users of parks and with public attitudes towards the management of non- native plant and animal species in national parks. (See the section on national needs research for full citations and online links.)
- Peer Reviews. The TAMU office coordinated peer reviews and revisions of a draft *Social Science Research Review* monograph on the economic significance of recreation on national parks and other public lands. The monograph is authored by Dr. Daniel Stynes of Michigan State University.
- Alaska Region Social Science Research Plan. The TAMU office cooperated with the Washington office to plan and conduct nine stakeholder workshops for the Alaska Region Social Science Research Plan.

Visitor Services Project <http://psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.htm>

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) conducts ten to 11 in- depth visitor surveys in National Park System units each year. The parks are selected from nominations made by NPS regions to the VSP Advisory Committee. Headquartered at the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit, the activities of the VSP are overseen by a principal investigator who is a faculty member in the College of Natural Resources at the university. The VCSS and the Advisory Committee provide additional oversight. For the past four fiscal years, 20 percent Fee Demonstration money has been available to the VSP to contribute up to two- thirds of the cost of surveys to small parks (annual budgets of less than \$1.5 million). Between FY 2002 and FY 2004, 19 small parks have taken advantage of this assistance to conduct visitor studies.



Figure 2. VSP survey, Keweenaw National Historical Park, Michigan.

- 2004 VSP Surveys. In 2004, VSP surveys were conducted at 11 units: Joshua Tree National Park, New River Gorge National River, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Keweenaw National Historical Park, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Saint- Gaudens National Historic Site, Manzanar National Historic Site, and John Day Fossil Beds National Monument (Table 1). Eight of these units qualified as small parks and were awarded funds from the VSP to offset the costs of their visitor surveys.

Table 1. Parks, survey dates, sample sizes, and response rates for the 2004 Visitor Services Project.

Park/Supervisor/Affiliation	Dates	Sample Size/Response Rates	
Joshua Tree NP Supv: M. Littlejohn, NPS	April 3-9 (7-day)	Sample: 700 Response: 74%	
New River Gorge NR Supv: M. Littlejohn, NPS	June 19-27 (9-day)	Sample: 839 Response: 66%	
George Washington Birthplace NM Supv: W. Shields, U. of Idaho	July 1-7 (7-day)	Sample: 312 Response: 64%	
Craters of the Moon NM & Preserve Supv: G. Vander Stoep, Michigan State U.	July 10-17 (8-day)	Sample: 512 Response: 83%	
Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP Supv: W. Shields, U. of Idaho	July 10-18 (9-day)	Sample: 367 Response: 76%	
Apostle Islands NL Supv: M. Littlejohn, NPS	July 24–Aug 1 (9-day)	Sample: 671 Response: 75%	
Keweenaw NHP Supv: B. Forist, Texas A&M U.	July 24–Aug 1 (9-day)	Sample: 565 Response: 71%	
Effigy Mounds NM Supv: M. Morgan, U. of Missouri	July 25-31 (7-day)	Sample: 378 Response: 78%	
Saint-Gaudens NHS Supv: J. Gramann, Texas A&M U.	August 14-22 (9-day)	Sample: 346 Response: 82%	
Manzanar NHS Supv: M. Littlejohn, NPS	Aug. 28–Sept. 5 (9-day)	Sample: 360 Response: 77%	
John Day Fossil Beds NM Supv: M. Schuett, Texas A&M U.	Aug. 29–Sept. 4 (7-day)	Sample: 396 Response: 78%	

- Faculty Involvement Program. In 2004, the VSP continued its successful practice of using university faculty members to supervise VSP surveys during summer months. Most parks request that their visitor surveys be conducted during the summer season. Because the VSP staff is not large enough to oversee all of these surveys, the employment of university faculty as supervisors is critical to the success of the program. Faculty members and staff from Texas A&M University, the University of Idaho, Michigan State University, and the University of Missouri participated in the faculty involvement program in 2004.

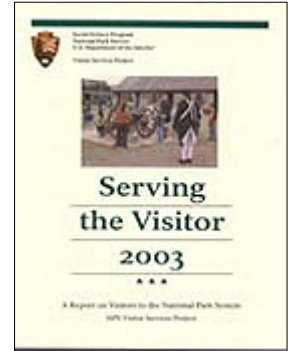
- VSP Publications. Reports were completed and closeout sessions held for the 11 units participating in the VSP Surveys in FY 2003. Copies of VSP reports can be downloaded at: <http://psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.reports.htm>

Visitor Use and Evaluation of Interpretive Media, a report analyzing data from 23 VSP surveys, was published by the VSP in FY 2004. Brian Forist, senior research associate in the Washington office, authored the report.

http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Visitor_Use_and_Evaluation.pdf

Serving the Visitor 2003, a report summarizing the results of VSP and VSC surveys (see below), was published in FY 2004. The report was expanded to include feedback from superintendents in parks where VSP surveys had been conducted in previous years. *Serving the Visitor 2003* can be downloaded at:

<http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/STV03.pdf>.



Visitor Survey Card <http://psu.uidaho.edu/vsc.htm>

The Visitor Survey Card (VSC) is a component of the Visitor Services Project. The VSC is a mail- back customer evaluation card containing questions designed to measure a park's performance with respect to NPS goals IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIb1 (visitor understanding and appreciation) under the Government Performance and Results Act. In FY 2004, an additional question was pre-tested for addition to the VSC: visitor satisfaction with entrance fee paid.

- 2004 VSC Surveys. In 2004, visitors to 309 parks returned 28,160 VSC surveys. Ninety- six percent of respondents rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities in the National Park System as either good or very good. The Systemwide response rate to the VSC, which uses no follow- ups, was 26%.
- Drop- Box Field Test. A test of the effectiveness of drop boxes in increasing the number of returned cards was conducted at Mount Rainier National Park and Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park (Seattle unit). Results indicated that in small parks such as Klondike Gold Rush NHP, a drop box used in conjunction with a mail- back option can produce response rates of 50% or greater without a follow- up. Plans were made to purchase additional drop boxes for the 2005 survey season.

Public Use Statistics Office <http://www2.nature.nps.gov/stats/>

Located in Denver, CO, the Public Use Statistics Office (PUSO) coordinates visitation counting in all units of the National Park System that report visits. The PUSO also provides short- term forecasts of visitation for the NPS Budget Office, consults with individual parks on changes in counting methods, writes and distributes a monthly executive summary of public use, and publishes the annual *National Park Service Statistical Abstract*. In addition, the PUSO responds on an almost daily basis to numerous requests for customized reports of NPS visitation. These requests come from planners,

engineers, private corporations, the media, researchers, and various offices and programs of the NPS and the Department of the Interior.

- New Reporting Units. In FY 2004, five new units of the National Park System began reporting visitation. Counting was done using methods and equipment provided by the PUSO. The new units included Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, Missouri National Recreational River, National World War II Memorial, and Niobrara National Scenic River.
- Park Audits. In FY 2004, 101 parks were reviewed or audited for proper counting instructions and procedures, resulting in numerous changes and updates. Almost all audits were conducted by e-mail or telephone. The following parks received significant audits or reviews: Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Chiricahua National Monument, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Grand Portage National Monument, Grand Canyon National Park, Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, Rocky Mountain National Park, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, San Juan Island National Historical Park, Shiloh National Military Park, and Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River.
- Traffic Counter Replacement Program. Over 100 traffic counters were distributed by PUSO to 65 parks during FY 2004. This replacement program is vital to improving the accuracy of NPS visitation statistics.
- Visitation Legacy Files. The purpose of the Legacy files maintained by PUSO is to assist analysts in identifying conditions that affect monthly or annual visitation to parks. Examples include road closures, special events, and natural disasters. In FY 2004, 436 separate entries were made in the visitation legacy files.
- Other Assistance. In FY 2004, the PUSO provided technical assistance to Utah State Parks, Washington State Parks, the New Zealand National Park Service, and to local parks and other federal agencies.
- Publications. PUSO produced 12 monthly executive summaries of public use that are distributed to regional directors and key WASO employees. Tom Wade, PUSO management analyst, is responsible for writing and distributing the monthly public use summaries.



Figure 3. NPS vehicle traffic counter at Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas.

The Public Use Statistics Office published the 2003 *National Park Service Statistical Abstract*. This authoritative record of visitation to units of the National Park System is authored by Butch Street, PUSO management analyst. The abstract also contains two- year visitation forecasts and a breakdown of National Park System acreage. A copy of the abstract is available to download at: <http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Abstract-Final2003.pdf>.

Money Generation Model (Version 2) <http://www.prr.msu.edu/mgm2/>

The Money Generation Model (MGM2) is the tool used by the NPS to estimate the economic contribution of visitor expenditures to local regions around parks. It is managed through a cooperative agreement with Michigan State University.

- **MGM2 Update and Expansion.** In FY 2004, economic impact estimates were updated based on 2003 visitation data. In addition, the model was expanded to include the impacts of park operations and to apportion impacts by Congressional district. Final estimates based on the update and expansion will be available in 2005.
- **Park- Specific Reports.** Parks participating in VSP visitor surveys may include a module of expenditure questions in their questionnaire. Data from these surveys is used to produce park- specific estimates of the economic contribution of visitor spending to local regions. In FY 2004, reports were published for five parks: Arches National Park, Capulin Volcano National Monument, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Fort Stanwix National Monument, and Grand Canyon National Park (north and south rims). The reports can be downloaded at: <http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/products.cfm#VSP>.

Social Science Research Review <http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/products.htm> - SSRR

The *Social Science Research Review* is a peer- reviewed serial publication of the Social Science Program. The purpose of each review is to provide the basis for scientific understanding of a social science issue critical to the NPS. Experts are commissioned to write the papers, and each monograph is peer- reviewed. In FY 2004, Daniel Stynes, professor emeritus at Michigan State University, completed revisions of *Economic Significance of Recreation on National Parks and Other Public Lands*. This publication is scheduled for release in Winter 2005.

Urban Recreation Research Center

The Urban Recreation Research Center (URRC) at Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, was established under a five- year cooperative agreement in FY 1999. The purposes of the URRC were: 1) to provide research, education, and technical assistance to help managers of urban units of the National Park System better protect park resources and serve visitors; 2) to create a wider diversity of social scientists conducting research on urban recreation, and 3) to increase the pool of culturally diverse students interested in NPS careers.

The cooperative agreement with the URRC was not renewed upon its expiration in FY 2003. This decision was based in part on the emergence of a strong national network of Cooperative

Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs), all of which incorporated minority institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges. However, in FY 2004, the Social Science Program provided funding for an additional job fair at Southern University. This fair placed several Southern University students in seasonal employment positions with the NPS.

Sabbatical in the Parks Clearinghouse <http://www1.nature.nps.gov/Sabbaticals/>

The Social Science Program serves as a clearinghouse for university faculty members seeking sabbatical experiences in the National Park System. The Sabbatical in the Parks program is managed by the Social Science Program's Washington office. The clearinghouse matches parks having specific research or technical assistance needs in the social and natural sciences with faculty members possessing the desired expertise. The Sabbatical in the Parks Clearinghouse is one of the principal ways in which the NPS makes parks available for science and applies science to the management needs of parks.

- **FY 2004 Placements.** Five sabbaticals were initiated in FY 2004 (Table 2). Four of these were in units of the National Park System, and one was with an NPS research center in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Table 2. Sabbatical-in-the-Parks Placements in fiscal year 2004.

Faculty Member	Institution	Park/Unit	Description
Dennis Defibaugh	Rochester Institute of Technology	Zion NP	Photography project to document resource conditions and to augment the park's photo collection.
Stephen Hart	Northern Arizona University	Hawaii Volcanoes NP	Study of ecosystem development on basaltic soils of varying ages in Hawaii.
David Rhode	University of Nevada-Reno	Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP, Death Valley NP	Study of the 1891 Death Valley expedition of C. Hart Merriam.
Scott Rice-Snow	Ball State University	National Cave and Karst Research Institute	Individual research and technical assistance regarding groundwater development in karst terrain to better understand oil and gas development.
Rob Young	Western Carolina University	Olympic NP	Technical assistance regarding coastal geological and ecosystem processes related to the pending removal of the Elwah Dam.

Socioeconomic Atlas Project

The Socioeconomic Atlas Project is managed by the NPS Visiting Senior Scientist, and is a component of the Social Science Program budget. The atlas project maps socioeconomic, demographic, and political indicators in regions of interest around units of the National Park System. Indicators include general population characteristics, social and cultural characteristics, economy and commerce, administration and government, land use, and recreation and tourism.

- **FY 2004 Atlases.** The atlas project continued in FY 2004 under a cooperative relationship with the Pennsylvania State University Department of Geography to streamline and expedite atlas production. The atlas for Saguaro National Park was completed, and additional atlases were initiated. With funding from the Social Science Program and the NPS Recreational Fee Demonstration Program, draft atlases were completed for the following NPS units:
 - Big Thicket National Preserve (Texas)
 - Canyon de Chelly National Monument (Arizona)
 - Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (Georgia and Tennessee)
 - Flight 93 National Memorial (Pennsylvania)
 - John Day Fossil Beds National Monument (Oregon)
 - Kings Mountain National Military Park (South Carolina)
 - National Capital Region Park Units (District of Columbia)
 - New River Gorge National River (West Virginia)
 - Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park (California)
- **CD-ROMs.** Prototype CD-ROMs were finalized, and masters were on schedule to be prepared in early FY 2005 for the parks listed above, as well as for Blue Ridge Parkway, Saguaro National Park, and the first four pilot parks (Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Joshua Tree National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, and Wilson's Creek National Battlefield). Each CD-ROM provides an electronic copy of the atlas, data, GIS files, and graphic files that can be used in presentations. The completed atlases will be posted on NPS Focus in FY 2005.

Canon National Parks Science Scholars Program <http://www.nature.nps.gov/canonscholarships/>

The Canon National Parks Science Scholars Program is managed by the NPS Visiting Senior Scientist, and is a component of the Social Science Program budget. The program is a partnership between Canon U.S.A., Inc., the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the NPS. It awards eight \$78,000 scholarships annually to doctoral students who conduct dissertation research critical to the needs of national parks. Research in the biological, social, and cultural sciences are eligible. Scholarship funding comes from Canon U.S.A., Inc., with four awards going to students studying at universities in the United States and four going to students studying at universities throughout the Americas, but not in the U.S.



Figure 4. Canon Scholars retreat in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

- FY 2004 Awards. In FY 2004, eight 2003 Canon Scholars were announced and funds transferred to the students' universities by the AAAS. The program Web site was redesigned, and an exhibit (funded by Canon) was displayed at several meetings. Six Canon Scholars completed their dissertations, received their Ph.D.'s, and graduated from the program.
- FY 2004 Competition. In FY 2004, over 140 dissertation proposals were received by the NPS. The AAAS evaluated and selected eight Canon Scholars. Planning began for the FY 2005 competition.
- Canon Scholars Retreat. The 2004 Canon Scholars Retreat was held in Vieques, Puerto Rico (funded by Canon).

Manage the Approval Process for OMB Submissions

<http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/survey.htm>

In consultation with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of the Interior (DOI), the NPS has developed an expedited approval process for NPS- sponsored surveys of the public. The expedited procedure streamlines the standard Paperwork Reduction Act approval process for NPS- sponsored surveys that collect data from park visitors, potential visitors, and residents of communities near parks. Survey questions must cover specific, pre- approved topic areas.

In FY 2004, 51 surveys, focus groups, and field experiments were approved under the expedited review process. Approved studies were conducted in or for 44 units of the National Park System. On average, it took 29 calendar days from initial submission to the Social Science Program for an information collection to be reviewed and approved by OMB. Six additional studies were either withdrawn by the principal investigators or deferred to a later year. The Social Science Program declined one proposed survey, and one survey was declined by OMB.

Three additional applications (including a renewal of the expedited review program) were submitted under the standard Information Collection Review process, which requires more opportunity for public comment on the collection before it can be conducted. Final approval of these submissions was not expected until FY 2005.



Figure 5. Saint- Gaudens National Historic Site, location of one of the 51 NPS social science studies receiving expedited OMB approval in FY 2004.

Provide Direction to the National Needs Research Program of the NPS

<http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/products.htm> - Comprehensive Survey

When funding is available, the Social Science Program supports research meeting the national needs of the NPS. The studies funded by the National Needs Research Program are those that are unlikely to be advanced by any single unit, region, or program. In FY 2004, two thematic reports from the 2000 NPS Comprehensive Survey of the American Public were published:

- Solop, F., Hagen, K., & Ostergen, D. (2003). *Ethnic and racial diversity of national park system visitors and non- visitors*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service Social Science Program. [http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Ethnic and Racial Diversity Report 12 2003.pdf](http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Ethnic_and_Racial_Diversity_Report_12_2003.pdf)
- Solop, F., Hagen, K., Ostergen, D. (2004). *Managing non- native plants and animals in the national park system: Analysis of public opinion*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service Social Science Program. [http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Managing Non-Native Plants and Animals Report 07 2004.pdf](http://www1.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Managing_Non-Native_Plants_and_Animals_Report_07_2004.pdf)

Serve as Liaison with Other Science and Related Programs of the NPS

Park Planning and Special Studies. The Social Science Program participated in a carrying capacity working group to develop recommendations for improving the consideration of park visitor capacities and visitor- caused impacts on park resources during the General Management Planning process. Specifically, the Social Science Program took the lead in organizing and convening a workshop (scheduled for March 2005) to identify and prioritize social variables that all parks should routinely collect for use in visitor capacity and other planning.

Fee Program. The Social Science Program cooperated with the NPS Fee Program and with Shenandoah National Park in a pilot test of a Visitor Information System. From March through December 2004, fee collectors at Shenandoah collected Zip codes and person- per- vehicle counts from groups entering the park.

Natural Resources Year in Review. Social Science Program staff contributed three articles to the 2004 *Natural Resources Year in Review* publication. These included reports on the pilot test of the Visitor Information System, recent changes in the Visitor Services Project, and a summary of the technical report, *Visitor Use and Evaluation of Interpretive Media*.

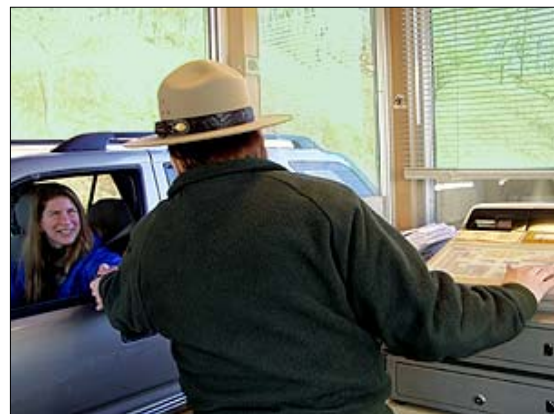


Figure 6. A fee collector electronically records visitor information at one of the entrance stations at Shenandoah National Park, Virginia.

Conferences, Meetings, and Other Involvement. Social Science Program staff made presentations and participated in panels at the following conferences and meetings during FY 2004: Visitor Studies Association, National Invasive Species Council, National Association for Interpretation workshop, NPS Interpretive Leadership Seminar, Systemwide Fee Collectors Training Workshop, and the National Junior Ranger Program Workshop. In addition, the Social Science Program responded to several inquiries from the media regarding trends in visitation to National Park System units. The program also participated as an active member of the Education Evaluation Coordination Team, a subcommittee of the Systemwide Education Council.

Serve as Liaison with the USGS, the Department of the Interior, and Other Federal Agencies

Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute. The Visiting Chief Social Scientist participated in the 2004 review of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute in Missoula, MT. The Leopold Institute is an interagency center conducting social and natural science research on wilderness issues. Outcomes of this involvement included an agreement to co-chair a session on applications of social science research at the 2005 George Wright Society meeting and an ongoing dialogue on research regarding age trends in recreational use of wilderness and other public lands. The Leopold Institute also supplied significant input into the Alaska Region Social Science Research Plan.

Advise the Secretary, Director, and National Leadership Council

The Social Science Program regularly receives requests for information and analysis from the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, the NPS Director's Office, and other administrative programs of the NPS and the Department of the Interior. In FY 2004, many of these requests dealt with summarizing and interpreting data from the Money Generation Model describing the economic impact of national parks on surrounding regions. For example, the Social Science Program produced a series of Power Point slides illustrating the economic impacts of parks for the Secretary of the Interior to use in presentations to various groups.

About the NPS Social Science Program

The role and functions of the NPS Social Science Program are to: provide leadership and direction to the social science activities of the NPS, coordinate social science activities with other programs of the NPS, act as liaison with the USGS Biological Resources Division and other federal agencies on social science activities, provide technical support to parks, park clusters, support offices, and regional offices, and support a program of applied social science research related to national research needs of the NPS.

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